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IMPLEMENTATION OF THE OUTCOME OF THE FOURTH WORLD CONFERENCE ON WOMEN

Report of the Third Committee

Rapporteur: Mrs. Mónica MARTÍNEZ (Ecuador)

I. INTRODUCTION

1. At its 4th plenary meeting, on 19 September 1997, the General Assembly, on the recommendation of the General Committee, decided to include in the agenda of its fifty-second session the item entitled "Implementation of the outcome of the Fourth World Conference on Women" and to allocate it to the Third Committee.

2. The Committee considered the item jointly with item 105 entitled "Advancement of women" at its 7th to 12th meetings, from 20 to 23 October 1997, and took action on the item at its 18th, 24th, 28th, 30th, 39th and 43rd meetings, on 28 October and 3, 6, 7, 17 and 19 November 1997. An account of the Committee's discussion is contained in the relevant summary records (A/C.3/52/SR.7-12, 18, 24, 28, 30, 39 and 43).

3. For its consideration of the item, the Committee had before it the following documents:

(a) Report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the outcome of the Fourth World Conference on Women (A/52/281);

(b) Letter dated 19 March 1997 from the Permanent Representative of Bangladesh to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General, transmitting documents issued at the Microcredit Summit, held at Washington, D.C. from 2 to 4 February 1997 (A/52/113-E/1997/18);

(c) Letter dated 1 October 1997 from the Permanent Representative of Colombia to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General, transmitting the communiqué of the Meeting of Ministers for Foreign Affairs and Heads of

Delegation of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, held in New York on 25 September 1997 (A/52/447-S/1997/775);

(d) Letter dated 13 October 1997 from the Permanent Representative of the United Republic of Tanzania to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General, transmitting the Ministerial Declaration of the Group of 77 adopted at the twenty-first annual meeting of Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the Group of 77, held in New York on 26 September 1997 (A/52/460).

4. At the 7th meeting, on 20 October, introductory statements were made by the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women, the Director of the United Nations International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women and the Deputy Director of the United Nations Development Fund for Women (see A/C.3/52/SR.7).

5. At the 9th meeting, on 21 October, a statement was made by the Chairperson of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (see A/C.3/52/SR.9).

II. CONSIDERATION OF PROPOSALS

A. Draft resolution A/C.3/52/L.16/Rev.1

6. For the action taken on draft resolution A/C.3/52/L.16/Rev.1, see document A/52/637.

B. Draft resolution A/C.3/52/L.17

7. For the action taken on draft resolution A/C.3/52/L.17, see document A/52/637.

C. Draft resolution A/C.3/52/L.42

8. At the 39th meeting, on 17 November, the representative of Egypt, on behalf of the Chairperson, introduced a draft resolution entitled "Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women and full implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action" (A/C.3/52/L.42), which was submitted on the basis of informal consultations.

9. At the 43rd meeting, on 19 November, the Committee adopted draft resolution A/C.3/52/L.42 without a vote (see para. 10).

III. RECOMMENDATION OF THE THIRD COMMITTEE

10. The Third Committee recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of the following draft resolution:

Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women and full implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolutions 50/42 of 8 December 1995, 50/203 of 22 December 1995 and 51/69 of 12 December 1996,

Taking note of Economic and Social Council resolutions 1996/6 of 22 July 1996 on the follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women and 1996/34 of 25 July 1996 on the system-wide medium-term plan for the advancement of women, 1996-2001, as well as the Council's agreed conclusions 1997/2 on mainstreaming the gender perspective into all policies and programmes in the United Nations system,[1]

Reaffirming that the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action[2] will require immediate and concerted action by all to create a peaceful, just and humane world based on all human rights and fundamental freedoms, including the principle of equality for all people of all ages and from all walks of life, and to that end, recognizing that broad-based and sustained economic growth in the context of sustainable development is necessary to sustain social development and social justice,

Deeply convinced that the Beijing Declaration[3] and Platform for Action, adopted at the Fourth World Conference on Women, are important contributions to the advancement of women worldwide and must be translated into effective action by all States, the United Nations system and other organizations concerned, as well as non-governmental organizations,

Recognizing that the implementation of the Platform for Action rests primarily at the national level, that Governments, non-governmental organizations, and public and private institutions should be involved in the implementation process, and that national mechanisms also have an important role to play, and bearing in mind that promotion of international cooperation is essential for the effective implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action,

Reaffirming its decision that the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council and the Commission on the Status of Women, in accordance with their respective mandates and with Assembly resolution 48/162 of 20 December 1993 and other relevant resolutions, constitute a three-tiered intergovernmental mechanism that plays the primary role in the overall policy-making and follow-up

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[1] See A/52/3, chap. IV, sect. A.

[2] Report of the Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing, 4-15 September 1995 (United Nations publication, Sales No. 96.IV.13), resolution 1, annex II.

[3] Ibid., annex I.

and in coordinating the implementation and monitoring of the Platform for Action, and reaffirming the need for a coordinated follow-up to and implementation of the results of major international conferences in the economic, social and related fields,

Reaffirming that the Commission on the Status of Women has a central role as a functional commission assisting the Economic and Social Council in the monitoring, within the United Nations system, of the implementation of the Platform for Action and in advising the Council thereon, and should therefore be strengthened,

Reaffirming also that the Economic and Social Council should continue to oversee system-wide coordination on the basis of an integrated approach in the implementation of the Platform for Action, including the mainstreaming of a gender perspective, and should ensure overall coordination of the follow-up to and implementation of the results of all United Nations international conferences in the economic, social and related fields and report thereon to the General Assembly,

1. Takes note with appreciation of the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the outcome of the Fourth World Conference on Women;[4]

2. Welcomes the initiatives and actions taken by Governments, the United Nations system and other international organizations, including their secretariats, as well as by non-governmental organizations and other actors of civil society, towards the implementation of the Beijing Declaration[1] and Platform for Action[2] adopted by the Conference;

3. Stresses that Governments have the primary responsibility for implementing the Platform for Action, and reaffirms that Governments should continue to commit themselves at the highest political level to its implementation and should take a leading role in coordinating, monitoring and assessing progress in the advancement of women;

4. Calls once again upon States, the United Nations system and all other actors to implement the Platform for Action, in particular by promoting an active and visible policy of mainstreaming a gender perspective at all levels, including in the design, monitoring and evaluation of all policies and programmes in order to ensure effective implementation of all critical areas of concern of the Platform for Action;

5. Calls for intensified efforts at the international level to integrate the equal status and all human rights of women into the mainstream of United Nations system-wide activity and to address those issues regularly and systematically throughout the relevant United Nations bodies and mechanisms;

6. Draws attention to the need to give due consideration to the human rights of women and the girl child in the preparations for the five-year review of the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action adopted by the World

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[4] A/52/281.

Conference on Human Rights[5] and the commemoration of the fiftieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights;[6]

7. Welcomes the adoption, by the Economic and Social Council, of agreed conclusions 1997/2 on mainstreaming the gender perspective into all policies and programmes in the United Nations system,[1] to serve as a comprehensive basis for concrete steps to achieve measurable progress in gender mainstreaming at all levels and in all areas, and endorses the definition, set of principles and specific recommendations for gender mainstreaming contained therein;

8. Welcomes the steps already taken by the Secretary-General to draw the attention of all senior managers in the United Nations system to agreed conclusions 1997/2 of the Economic and Social Council and the need to ensure full accountability for their implementation, urges the Secretary-General to continue his efforts to ensure that managers are held accountable for gender mainstreaming in their areas of responsibility, and requests the Secretary-General and his senior managers to ensure, inter alia, in the work of the executive committees, that gender mainstreaming is systematically integrated in the reform process of the United Nations;

9. Reiterates that gender mainstreaming as a strategy for achieving gender equality must become an integral part of all policies and programmes in the United Nations system and of national activities to follow-up and implement the Platform for Action and the outcomes of other recent United Nations conferences;

10. Directs all of its committees and bodies and draws the attention of other bodies of the United Nations system to the need to mainstream a gender perspective systematically into all areas of their work, in particular in such areas as macroeconomic questions, operational activities for development, poverty eradication, human rights, humanitarian assistance, budgeting, disarmament, peace and security, and legal and political matters;

11. Requests all bodies that deal with programme and budgetary matters, including the Committee for Programme and Coordination, to ensure that all programmes, medium-term plans and programme budgets visibly mainstream a gender perspective;

12. Invites other intergovernmental bodies, such as the governing bodies of the United Nations funds and programmes, to monitor the way in which the concerned agencies, funds and programmes implement gender mainstreaming in their respective medium-term plans and programme budgets, including at the field level;

13. Reiterates the Council's request to the Secretariat to present issues and approaches in a gender-sensitive manner when preparing reports so as to

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[5] A/CONF.157/24 (Part I), chap. III.

[6] Resolution 217 A (III).

provide the intergovernmental machinery with an analytical basis for gender-responsive policy formulation;

14. Emphasizes that the role of gender focal points as catalysts for gender mainstreaming and in providing advice, guidance and assistance in monitoring of progress needs to be strengthened, including through adequate resources and the support of the most senior levels of management and decision-making;

15. Requests the Economic and Social Council to ensure that gender mainstreaming is an integral part of all its activities concerning integrated follow-up to recent United Nations conferences, building upon its agreed conclusions 1997/2;

16. Urges Governments that have not yet done so to establish or strengthen appropriate national machineries for the advancement of women at the highest political level, appropriate intra- and inter-ministerial procedures and staffing, and other institutions with the mandate and capacity to broaden women's participation and integrate gender analysis into policies and programmes;

17. Notes with appreciation that many Governments have developed national strategies and action plans, some of them in consultation with non-governmental organizations, and urges those Governments that have not yet done so to prepare national action plans as strategic planning instruments, and to do so in consultation with non-governmental organizations, in the full implementation of the Platform for Action, and to participate in the discussion, by the Commission on the Status of Women in 1998, of a synthesis of national action plans as a first step in the comprehensive review and appraisal of the implementation of the Platform for Action;

18. Encourages non-governmental organizations, including women's organizations, to contribute to the design and implementation of these strategies or national plans of action in addition to their own programmes that complement government efforts;

19. Calls upon Governments to invite and encourage the active support and participation of all women and men and a broad and diverse range of institutional actors, including legislative bodies, academic and research institutions, professional associations, trade unions, local community groups and the media, as well as financial and non-profit organizations, in the implementation of the Platform for Action, while emphasizing the principle of shared responsibility between women and men for the achievement of gender equality;

20. Recognizes the importance attached to the regional and subregional monitoring of the global and regional platforms for action by regional commissions and other subregional or regional structures, within their mandates, in consultation with Governments, as well as the necessity of promoting cooperation among Governments of the same region in that respect;

21. Calls upon States to take action to fulfil the commitments for the advancement of women and for the strengthening of international cooperation made at the Fourth World Conference on Women, and reaffirms that adequate financial resources should be committed at the international level for the implementation of the Platform for Action in the developing countries, in particular those in Africa and the least developed countries;

22. Invites the Secretary-General, in the implementation of the United Nations system-wide initiative on Africa, to pay special attention to the needs and role of women as actors and beneficiaries in the development process;

23. Recognizes that implementation of the Platform for Action in the countries with economies in transition requires continued international cooperation and assistance, as indicated in the Platform for Action;

24. Reaffirms that in order to implement the Platform for Action a reformulation of policies and reallocation of resources may be needed, but that some policy changes may not necessarily have financial implications;

25. Also reaffirms that in order to implement the Platform for Action adequate mobilization of resources at the national and international levels, as well as new and additional resources to the developing countries, in particular those in Africa and the least developed countries, from all available funding mechanisms including multilateral, bilateral and private sources for the advancement of women, will also be required;

26. Calls upon Member States to allocate sufficient resources for undertaking gender impact analyses in order to develop successful national implementation strategies for the Platform for Action;

27. Recognizes that the creation of an enabling environment at the national and international levels is necessary to ensure the full participation of women in economic activities, and calls upon States to remove obstacles for the full implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action;

28. Requests Governments and the international community to implement specific programmes for the eradication of poverty and illiteracy, ensuring women's equal access to education, training, credit, employment and the promotion of entrepreneurial activities, and strongly urges the international community to support national efforts towards the advancement of women in developing countries, particularly those in Africa and the least developed countries;

29. Stresses that full and effective implementation of the Platform for Action will require a political commitment to make available human and financial resources for the empowerment of women, the integration of a gender perspective in budgetary decisions on policies and programmes, and adequate financing of specific programmes for securing equality between women and men;

30. Calls upon Member States to commit themselves to achieving gender balance by, inter alia, aiming at gender balance in the composition of delegations to the United Nations and other international forums and by

presenting, promoting and appointing women candidates in all government-appointed committees, boards and other relevant official bodies, as well as in all international bodies, institutions and organizations;

31. Requests the Secretary-General, in his capacity as Chairman of the Administrative Committee on Coordination, to formulate a new system-wide medium-term plan for the advancement of women to cover the period 2002-2005, to submit a new draft plan to the Economic and Social Council at its substantive session of 2000, taking into consideration the results of the Council's 1998 comprehensive mid-term review of the plan covering the period 1996-2001, in order to provide guidance for the medium-term plans of the individual organizations and bodies of the United Nations system, and to submit the draft plan to the Commission on the Status of Women at its forty-fourth session for comments;

32. Invites the Council to devote one high-level segment and one operational segment to the advancement of women and the implementation of the Platform for Action, taking into account the multi-year programme of work of the Commission on the Status of Women and all other functional commissions of the Council and the need for a system-wide approach to the implementation of the Platform for Action;

33. Welcomes the Council's decision to monitor annually, under an item entitled "Integrated follow-up of major United Nations conferences", the way in which its functional commissions and subsidiary bodies mainstream a gender perspective, on the basis of the annual report on the follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women, and invites once again all functional commissions of the Economic and Social Council, within their mandates, to take due account of the Platform for Action and to ensure the integration of gender aspects in their respective areas of work;

34. Reiterates its request to the Secretary-General to ensure that the Division for the Advancement of Women can effectively carry out all the tasks foreseen for it in the Platform for Action by, inter alia, providing sufficient human and financial resources within the regular budget of the United Nations and to ensure that the Division can play a catalytic role in support of gender mainstreaming in the new Department of Economic and Social Affairs, in the Secretariat, and through policy advisory services at the request of Governments, in cooperation with other bodies of the United Nations system;

35. Requests the Secretary-General to ensure that resident coordinators, in the execution of their mandates, fully incorporate a gender perspective, in particular, into the coordinated follow-up to recent global United Nations conferences, fully utilizing all the expertise available in the United Nations Development Fund for Women, the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women and other organizations of the United Nations system;

36. Notes the importance of the activities undertaken by the United Nations Development Fund for Women and the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women in the implementation of the Platform for

Action, and encourages the strengthening of their cooperation and coordination within their respective mandates;

37. Encourages the Division for the Advancement of Women, acting as the secretariat of the Commission on the Status of Women, to play an especially active role in generating new ideas, proposing practical suggestions and promoting constructive implementation of the Platform for Action, including gender mainstreaming;

38. Welcomes the growing number of ratifications to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women[7] and the withdrawal of reservations, and invites States parties to include information on measures taken to implement the Platform for Action in their reports, and also encourages the Division for the Advancement of Women to provide to Governments, at their request, advice on reporting under the Convention;

39. Urges States to limit the extent of any reservations they lodge to the Convention, to formulate any such reservations as precisely and as narrowly as possible, to ensure that no reservations are incompatible with the object and purpose of the Convention or otherwise incompatible with international treaty law, to review their reservations regularly with a view to withdrawing them, and to withdraw reservations that are contrary to the object and purpose of the Convention or that are otherwise incompatible with international treaty law;

40. Welcomes the progress made by the Inter-Agency Committee on Women and Gender Equality in strengthening system-wide coordination for implementation of the Platform for Action and gender mainstreaming, and encourages the Committee to continue its cooperation with Administrative Committee on Coordination bodies to develop strategies, tools and methodologies, such as gender-sensitive budgeting, to enhance implementation of the Platform for Action and for gender mainstreaming, particularly at the field level;

41. Notes with appreciation the work done by the Division for the Advancement of Women and by the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women, inter alia, in her role as the Chairperson of the Inter-Agency Committee on Women and Gender Equality, for the system-wide implementation of the Platform for Action, for increased system-wide attention to gender mainstreaming, and towards the achievement of gender balance in the United Nations Secretariat and system-wide, and in that regard stresses the importance of increasing human and financial resources from all available funding sources;

42. Encourages international financial institutions to review and revise policies, procedures and staffing to ensure that investments and programmes benefit women;

43. Invites the World Trade Organization to consider how it might contribute to the implementation of the Platform for Action, including activities in cooperation with the United Nations system;

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[7] Resolution 34/180, annex.

44. Decides to appraise the progress on an annual basis and to retain in the agenda of its forthcoming sessions the item entitled "Implementation of the outcome of the Fourth World Conference on Women";

45. Decides to convene, in the year 2000, a high-level plenary review to appraise and assess the progress achieved in the implementation of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women[8] and the Beijing Platform for Action five years after its adoption, and to consider further actions and initiatives, and requests the Secretary-General, with a view to ensuring participation at a high political level, to explore in a report to the General Assembly at its fifty-second session the possibility, among other options, of convening the review (a) at the start of the fifty-fifth session of the General Assembly, (b) within the framework of the proposed millennium Assembly, if agreed upon by the General Assembly, (c) following the annual session of the Commission on the Status of Women, or (d) as a special session of the General Assembly;

46. Decides that the Commission on the Status of Women shall serve as the preparatory committee for the high-level review, and as such will be open to the participation of all States Members of the United Nations and members of specialized agencies and of observers, in accordance with the established practice of the General Assembly, and invites the Commission to take appropriate action towards that end, including giving attention to appropriate arrangements for the involvement and participation of non-governmental organizations in the review;

47. Requests the Commission on the Status of Women to consider at its forty-second session the report of the Secretary-General requested in paragraph 45 above, thus enabling the General Assembly, through the Economic and Social Council, to decide on this issue at its fifty-second session or as soon as possible thereafter;

48. Requests the Secretary-General to report annually to the General Assembly, the Commission on the Status of Women and the Economic and Social Council on follow-up to and implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action.

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[8] Report of the World Conference to Review and Appraise the Achievements of the United Nations Decade for Women: Equality, Development and Peace, Nairobi, 15-26 July 1985 (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.85.IV.10), chap. I, sect. A.